

Chairman Towns weighed in on the need to ban the recreational use of P2P software on all Federal computers on the [Huffington Post](#)

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The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform began examining the dangers posed by open network peer-to-peer (P2P) software almost a decade ago. P2P was relatively new then and it offered both tremendous promise and unseen dangers. Since that time, we have been told of numerous security breaches as a result of sensitive data falling into the hands of bad actors. I repeatedly voiced my concerns about the risks of open network P2P software and encouraged Congress to act in order to prevent future incidents involving the unintentional distribution of sensitive and confidential information.

During the last year alone, highly sensitive information was discovered on P2P networks. News reports indicated that information about the electronic wiring for President Obama's "Marine One" helicopter was downloaded in Iran; that financial information belonging to Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer was leaked; and plans for President Obama's motorcade route and the location of the First Family's safe house were found on open P2P networks. These news reports prompted the Committee to reopen its investigation into the dangers posed by P2P software...

This week the fight to reform P2P software will take a crucial step forward when the Committee I chair, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, marks up H.R. 4098, the "Secure Federal File Sharing Act." The bill, which I introduced in November 2009, makes important progress toward banning the recreational use of P2P software on all Federal computers, computer systems and networks including those belonging to government contractors. The bill would also require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve legitimate uses of P2P software on Federal computers on a case-by-case basis and provide Congress annually a list of those agencies that are using P2P software and for what purposes.

Earlier this year, the Committee [held a hearing to examine the dangers posed by peer-to-peer software](#)